

After Altadena Town Council candidates were announced, NBBA forwarded an invitation to all candidates to participate in our Candidates Forum on June 1, 2017, 7 PM, at our Altadena Community Center, and asked each to respond to our survey questions. Below are the responses received from the candidates.

NBBA hopes that these responses and the additional discussion at the forum encourage broader community participation, as well as provide for more transparency and accountability for our town governance.

Early voting will be held on Tuesday, June 6, from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. at the Altadena Library, 600 E. Mariposa Street. Polls will be open throughout Altadena on Election Day, Saturday, June 6, 2015. There are nine polling sites throughout Altadena; each will be open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m at the following locations: Altadena Main Library (600 E. Mariposa), Gordy's (Windsor & Woodbury), Hoopla (2591 Fair Oaks), Aveson School (Altadena Dr. & Lincoln Ave.), and Tekeyan Cultural Center (New York Dr. & Allen).

If you are 18 years or older and a resident of Altadena, you will be able to vote for a candidate in your Census Tract (CT) as long as you have something that identifies you as an Altadena resident - such as a bill with your name and your Altadena address on it, or an ID. Unsure of your CT? See <http://tinyurl.com/altadena-census-tracts> for a map to check your area. Check the NBBA website (buildingabetteraltadena.org) or the Town Council website at <http://altadenatowncouncil.org/> for more information on the election.

Census Tract 4601 (0 candidates)

No candidate for this tract.

Census Tract 4602 (1 candidate)

Billy Malone

Billy.Malone@AltadenaTownCouncil.org

What, in your view, are the three most pressing community-wide issues affecting Altadena?

1. Quality of life: Keeping that small town feel that makes Altadena, Altadena. In this environment of divisiveness it is more important than ever to create connections and build our relationships locally. Altadena has numerous community organizations and interest groups that consist of many different characters and opinions that often clash, but they are all focused on one thing...the betterment of Altadena and the quality of life we all desire. It may seem discouraging to have so many groups vocalizing different perspectives, but I see that as a positive, because it is evident that there are so many people who are passionate about improving life in Altadena. I think it is critical to facilitate collaboration and partnership between our organizations and groups in order to better strengthen, develop, and implement the ideas and programs that are proposed by these various entities. Supporting each other in areas in which we agree and being open to change is our greatest strength.
2. Economics: Attracting and keeping business in Altadena. We have an excess of empty storefronts throughout our commercial and retail corridors. The strength of any community is based on all aspects of that community and our business community is a major part of that. If we can increase our business presence while respecting the small town feel of Altadena, then more people will not just shop local but stay local. Staying local means support for all

things Altadena and a strong united community. As a member of the Altadena Chamber of Commerce, I also have a unique perspective and understanding as to the needs of small businesses.

3. Safety: Last year's drive-by shooting death of 4 year old Salvador Esparza brought a spotlight to public safety and the fact that, despite our small town feel, it cannot be taken for granted. The local crime blogs demonstrate a need for dialogue between the sheriffs and the community. However, public safety does not just include major crime but public awareness and education as well, whether it's keeping our streets safe and walkable or staying updated with CERT and natural disaster preparedness or teaching residents how to protect their homes and vehicles from theft. Public safety is an important, ongoing issue that should always be at the forefront.

How can the Altadena Town Council best interact with Los Angeles County government departments?

A councilmember should always remember that she/he represents the whole community and not just themselves, and therefore, to be effective in representing the needs of his constituents, he needs to maintain objectivity when dealing with community issues. It is imperative to maintain good communication and a positive relationship with county and all its departments or you risk being shut out. County is a massive entity, so building good relationships takes time. I have already served two terms on the council and have developed many effective relationships within county. However, as people and positions change, I know it is essential to continue to build and cultivate these relationships.

How do you plan to inform and involve the residents of your census tract in community affairs?

You cannot represent effectively if you do not have a full understanding of your community, both the needs and expectations of its residents. It is essential to have continuous dialogue and be easily accessible whenever possible.

To be an effective representative of a community you have to be plugged into the community via Internet, social media, local media (difficult because there is very little in Altadena, but we have to work with what we have); be active in or maintain partnership with as many local groups as possible; support our schools, local business community, and our library district; and support and be actively involved in local community events. Over the past two years I have built up a presence throughout Altadena and I continue to strive to build that presence. As a community leader one should also be reachable and approachable. Any constituent that has contacted me will verify that I am always reachable and I always follow through on whatever issue that is presented to me. Working with and assisting residents is the highlight of my responsibilities.

Census Tract 4603.01 (2 candidates)

Damon Hobdy

Damon.Hobdy@AltadenaTownCouncil.org

What, in your view, are the three most pressing community-wide issues affecting Altadena?

- A. La Vina - the CUP involving La Vina is certainly the most pressing issue at this time that will affect all of Altadena - not just N.W. Altadena. I am one of the Census Tract reps on this issue.
- B. Safe roads - complaints of speeding in certain areas of Altadena has been a growing concern.
- C. Parking issues - clean roads is important. Too many cars are being parked during street sweeping time along Altadena Drive. Additionally, all of Altadena has no parking each day from a certain time to a certain time. Altadena residents are not aware of this ordinance. Lessening cars on the street during certain times, contributes to lessening of the residential burglaries and crime. Through my efforts no parking signs at certain times will be posted in August 2017, on Altadena Drive between Lincoln and Olive.

How can the Altadena Town Council best interact with Los Angeles County government departments?

We are doing so through our Executive Committee which I am a member of. However, each member of the Town Council must comprise their contact lists of individuals in County government so that issues affecting Altadena residents can be

addressed completely and expeditiously. It takes commitment to resolve certain issues.

How do you plan to inform and involve the residents of your census tract in community affairs?

Continue to do what I am doing. Organize and arrange Meet and Greet - Judy Matthews and I have had 3 such meet and greets in my total 4 years on Council. At the last Meet and Greet, over 60 residents attended and were provided information about community issues and were able to provide their feedback. E-mail residents - I have comprised a very significant contact list. When I e-mail residents concerning certain issues, such residents have responded with suggestions and input. Block party meetings with residents. I have participated in several and we are currently organizing a Mock disaster preparedness drill.

Dorothy Wong

dot@socalcross.org

What, in your view, are the three most pressing community-wide issues affecting Altadena?

- A. Improving community engagement working together to make Altadena better while preserving our historic places and open space.
- B. Improving our Business Districts / Support small business to succeed and become meeting places.
- C. Improve mobility - Safer Streets and Trails for all users. Safe routes to schools, churches, library and parks.

How can the Altadena Town Council best interact with Los Angeles County government departments?

Create a real masterplan together for Altadena by Altadena increasing civic engagement and becoming a stronger voice for the community. Organize community working groups to create-support these objectives. Have strategic meetings with the County officials to achieve these objectives.

How do you plan to inform and involve the residents of your census tract in community affairs?

- Host regular community meetings within in our CT to invite residents to become engaged in community affairs and identify issues we care about. Then forming working groups within our CT to report to our TC members which will better represent our CT as a collective voice. This can be done in creative ways to build excitement and keep the momentum.
- Establish an Altadena-wide communication network linking our community organizations including Town Council meetings and updates along with the already great work of organizations who already engage community such as our local schools and churches, ACONA, NBBA, AHS, and the Altadena Library District.
- Create an email and social medial communication network including newsletter, list serve, GoogleGroup, Facebook Page/Group or similar to allow people a place share their concerns, achievements, invites, etc.
- Improve neighborhood watch safety measures and CERT programming networks.

Census Tract 4603.02 (1 candidate)

Dr. Sandra Thomas

No response to candidate survey.

Census Tract 4610 (2 candidates)

Veronica Jones

vljones4610@gmail.com

What, in your view, are the three most pressing community-wide issues affecting Altadena?

The three most community-wide issues affecting Altadena are:

1. **Attracting and keeping businesses.** Economic development and revitalization is important for a thriving community. There is a need for on-going revitalization in the community to attract businesses, to benefit from their tax base and services for residents. Businesses, especially small businesses have a difficult time in Altadena. Larger more established businesses have not acknowledged the value of opening in Altadena. (Trader Joe's, Star-Bucks).
2. **Safety.** The need for a safer community is always a priority. Working with law-enforcement and residents making sure that we work together to ensure safety. I am a very active member of the SENCH neighborhood committee that focuses on safety for 4610 and we aim to keep neighbors informed and work as liaisons with the County Sheriff's Department. Practical things we can do to make our neighborhoods safer are:
 - Know your neighbors. Make sure someone in the neighborhood has a phone number to reach you in an emergency
 - Keep up your yard, and encourage your neighbors to do the same. Unkempt property attracts crime.
 - Be extra cautious when you go out of town, make sure your mail is taken care of and someone is checking on your home that can reach you.
 - Close your windows and blinds at night.
 - Encourage outdoor activity.
 - Know your local police sheriff.
 - Make sure that liquor stores don't encourage loitering and close within reasonable hours at night
3. **Clean streets and environmentally friendly neighborhoods.** Curtain noise pollution and visual blight by limiting car alarms, outdoor advertising and unsightly signs. Replace open spaces with pocket parks or dog walks. This will reduce illegal dumping and unauthorized parking. Encourage recycling, additional trash bins on busy streets. Encouraging homeowners to tend to their curbside lawns and businesses to contribute to a greener city are all elements that can be incorporated in a city plan.

How can the Altadena Town Council best interact with Los Angeles County government departments?

In order to effectively interact with Los Angeles County government departments we must first know what departments do and their roles in our community. We must build a relationship with the different departments that serve our needs, including: Animal Care & Control; Public Works, Board of Supervisors and L.A. County Sheriff's Department. Whenever possible Los Angeles County government departments must know who and where Altadena is before we approach them to help in our community. I have already made an effort to engage our new Board Supervisor, Kathryn Barger to begin a dialogue about what funding and opportunities are available to our city.

How do you plan to inform and involve the residents of your census tract in community affairs?

Communication is key in building and maintaining good neighborhoods. I plan to communicate through various methods including keeping residents informed by newsletters, updating the Council website and participating actively in public outreach. I will visit Community Block organizations to update residents and to get their input, as well as a newsletter to be distributed to my constituents. I will walk my community and get to know those that live there. Visiting various churches to get the word out will also be in my outreach plan. I am also interested in starting up a regular "coffee conversation," to be held at a convenient location which would serve as "office hours" for me to meet my constituents, and hear what they care about. It is important to not only listen to residents, it is important that their ideas and concerns are taken seriously. By involving each member of the community in the process, we will bring change and pride to the city. Technology is an important tool that should be harnessed to keep the community engaged and informed. In anticipation of this election, I created a personal email address for residents to start providing comments and ideas to me directly. I think it's very important to remain fully engaged during your tenure on the Council. Residents should know who you are, what you represent and what you are doing to ensure that time served on the Council is valuable and effective. I also plan on creating a FaceBook page for community engagement about events and

announcements. I am also compiling a list of addresses to keep our neighborhood census tract database up-to-date. Mailings, newsletters, meetings and at home visits are all tools that I will plan to use as well.

Brent Musson

No response to candidate survey.

Brent.Musson@AltadenaTownCouncil.org

Census Tract 4611 (1 candidate)

Justin Robertson

justin.robertson@AltadenaTownCouncil.org

What, in your view, are the three most pressing community-wide issues affecting Altadena?

I think a lack of reliable local news and information, and community-wide communication generally, is one of the most pressing issues facing Altadena. Our many vibrant civic orgs and institutions do their best to get the word out, but no one of them is singly able to broadcast to everyone. This is particularly important when, for such a relatively small community, the questions we're called to answer -- fences & hedges, the Ralphs building, the pipeline project, etc. -- seem so big.

Another important issue, more so in some parts of town than others, is balancing economic development and even beautification with fears of gentrification - a change in neighborhood character that can make it harder if not always impossible to hold on - and, more critically, displacement. In working to make Altadena an ever-better place to live, we must remain cognizant of these very real concerns, and that our diversity isn't just our strength, it's part of what defines us as a community.

Finally, an issue that affects every Altadenan young and old, mobile and otherwise, is the disconnect between the safe and pleasant streets Altadenans say they want, versus the streets we actually have; frequently built to highway standards, even in residential neighborhoods. Schools, parks, libraries, business districts, and even the street where you live: these are opportunities for the County to improve how our largest contiguous public spaces work for everyone, including drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists, equestrians, and transit riders. Even folks who only walk to and from their cars are pedestrians at some point! When our streets better serve more *people,* regardless of how they get around, everybody wins.

How can the Altadena Town Council best interact with Los Angeles County government departments?

The Altadena Town Council is charged, according to its by-laws, with "conveying the needs and wishes of the residents to any county state or federal governmental body or agency, and [providing] a forum for a town meeting in which to discuss issues of concern to the Altadena Community." I would argue that this charge goes beyond reviewing Conditional Use Permits or calling in quality of life issues; we can also provide a local forum for *county-wide* matters that affect our neighborhoods, like the County's historic preservation or garage sale ordinances, Measure M spending in unincorporated areas, or updated rules regarding second units.

Additionally, should any of our local civic organizations believe the Council's voice would benefit their efforts to move policy, secure funds, or otherwise represent some segment of our population, I believe we ought to consider how that too might fit within our stated purpose. (Conversely, I would encourage these organizations to proactively reach out to the Council for such support.)

How do you plan to inform and involve the residents of your census tract in community affairs?

I will continue to make use of the tools at my disposal, including Nextdoor.com, Facebook, email, and knocking on doors to get the word out about what we're up to, distribute information about upcoming events, and when I need to know how residents feel on a particular issue. Of course, not everyone in 4611 is as wedded to their computer or phone as I am, and I'm open to learning from my neighbors how I personally can best address the communications challenges described in my first answer.

Census Tract 4612 (0 candidates)

No candidate for this tract.

Census Tract 4613

Sylvia Vega

No response to candidate survey.

Sylvia.Vega@AltadenaTownCouncil.org